



## VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

### **Village Board Statement**

June 02, 2020

Dear Scarsdale Community,

During the march from Selma in 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."

We are dismayed that justice – more than 52 years after Dr. King's death – is still not clearly in view.

Rather than justice, we see the image of George Floyd, pinned with a knee to the ground and unresponsive. We are confronted with the harsh reality of Mr. Floyd's murder at the hands of a white Minneapolis police officer. And, we must recognize that the use of excessive police force resulting in death is a chronic problem on the national level, one that disproportionately impacts black Americans and other people of color.

We stand with our neighbors in outrage now and always when any individual sworn to protect and serve commits an indefensible act of violence.

We must demand swift and appropriate prosecution for each offense committed, and endeavor to remove officers with demonstrated failure to respect basic human rights before such behavior escalates to loss of life.

We must do more as a nation. Prosecution of the latest action of a "bad cop" taking the life of a black citizen is a start. But, more fundamentally, we need to examine how we, as individuals, communities, and as a nation, can begin to make genuine progress in attacking an insidious disease capable of destroying civil society: Racism.

Our values in Scarsdale are clear and unequivocal: We demand safety, equity, and justice, firmly rejecting racism in all its forms. In our personal and professional lives, we devote substantial energy and resources to effect positive change in our community and the world beyond. To that end, the Village Board of Trustees is committed to supporting an environment where public discourse on the topic of racism can help bring us closer to the nation we can be, to the nation that we should be.

Our police force is amongst the finest, as recognized by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies. We can take comfort in being served and protected by a highly trained and professional police force with a demonstrated track record of maintaining a safe and secure environment for our residents, businesses, and visitors, alike.

One of the strengths of our Police Department is the diversity and character of its personnel. Our officers come from varied socioeconomic and racial backgrounds. They are mothers and fathers, and daughters and sons of families who are proud that their loved ones chose a profession that places others above themselves. We train, teach, and require that our officers exercise the utmost professionalism, restraint,

and good judgement, demonstrating respect for all persons they contact, regardless of economic status, gender, color, or any of the other characteristics that are often used to divide people.

Our Police Department is accountable for valuing all human life and integrates that responsibility into its interactions with every contact, whether a complainant, victim, or person in custody, assuring that each is equally protected and treated with the utmost dignity.

The Village of Scarsdale emphatically supports peaceful protest and assembly. We also believe that a safe environment is critical to encouraging appropriate public discourse on sensitive, emotionally-charged topics; people should be able have their voices heard, understood, and acted upon, not overshadowed by a breakdown in civil society.

Yes, the arc of the moral universe is long, and it does indeed bend toward justice. We owe it to ourselves and our children to get there.

Sincerely,



Mayor Marc Samwick



Deputy Mayor Jane Veron



Trustee Justin Arest



Trustee Lena Crandall



Trustee Jonathan Lewis



Trustee Seth Ross



Trustee Rochelle Waldman